

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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R 280820Z SEP 73

FM AMCONSUL KARACHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7574

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY DACCA

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E.O. 11652: N/A (DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT)

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: BALUCHISTAN: SEPT. 28 ASSEMBLY SESSION

LIKELY TO BE LIGHTLY ATTENDED

REF: (A) KARACHI &852

(B) KARACHI 1750

BEGIN SUMMARY: ON CONVENING OF BALUCHISTAN ASSEMBLY
SESSION SEPT. 28 AS MANY AS 10 OF ASSEMBLY'S 21 MEMBERS
MAY EITHER BOYCOTT SESSION TOTALLY, OR BOYCOTT SESSION
FOLLOWING TAKING OATHS OF OFFICE UNDER NEW CONSTITUTION.
ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION BACKGROUND NEGOTIA-
TIONS HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY TO ACHIEVE RESOLUTION OF POLI-
TICAL IMPASSE IN THE PROVINCE SINCE PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S
EARLY SEPT. TOUR, LITTLE OF THIS SPECULATION SOUNDS
CREDIBLE AND WHILE SOME 11TH HOUR DEVELOPMENT CANNOT
BE RULED OUT, IT APPEARS MORE THAN LIKELY ASSEMBLY WILL
CONVENE AS PLANNED, ATTENDANCE WILL BE POOR AND IMPASSE
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WILL CONTINUE. END SUMMARY

1. THIN ATTENDANCE: SEPTEMBER 26 BALUCHISTAN NAP PROVINCIAL WORKING COMMITTEE DECIDED THAT PARTY MEMBERS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ASSEMBLY SPEAKER BAROZAI WOULD NOT ATTEND THE ASSEMBLY SESSION. WHILE 2 OF THE 3 JUI MPAS HAVE ABANDONED THEIR COALITION WITH NAP AND JOINED CURRENT GOVERNMENT IT LIKELY JUI MPA SHAMSUDDIN WILL FOLLOW LEAD OF HIS NAP COLLEAGUES. FOUR NAP MPAS--MENGAL, MARRI, GUL KHAN NASEER, AND SHER ALI KHAN--LIKELY REMAIN IN CUSTODY SEPTEMBER 28. ONE OTHER NAP MPA, ABDUL REHMAN, HAS BEEN ABSENT FROM THE PUBLIC SCENE SINCE AUGUST 16 ROUNDUP OF NAP LEADERS AND IS THOUGHT TO BE UNDERGROUND OR OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY. THREE ADDITIONAL NAP MPAS AND POSSIBLY THE LADY MPA FAZEELA ALIANI, EXPECTED TO CONFORM WITH PARTY'S DECISION. ASSEMBLY THUS LIKELY TO BE FACED WITH PROSPECT OF MEETING WITH ONLY 10 MEMBERS AND SPEAKER PRESENT FOR LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS FOLLOWING CEREMONIAL SWEARING IN. ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED THAT IF NAP MEMBERS FAIL TO ATTEND SESSION AND TAKE OATH UNDER NEW CONSTITUTION, THEY MAY JEOPARDIZE THEIR SEATS. IF THIS APPEARS REAL HAZARD, IT IS EXPECTED THAT MEMBERS WILL ATTEND OATH TAKING CEREMONY AND THEN COMMENCE THEIR BOYCOTT. AT SEPTEMBER 27 PRESS CONFERENCE IN QUETTA, NAP MPA AHMED NAWAZ BUGTI, WITH DEPUTY ASSEMBLY SPEAKER, JUI MPA SHAMSUDDIN PRESENT, STATED THAT NAP/JUI WOULD ATTEND SESSION ONLY IF DETAINED NAP MNA'S--BIZENJO AND DR. ABDUL HYE BALUCH--AND MPAS WERE RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY.

2. IS THERE A DEAL IN THE WORKS?: NAP MPA SHER ALI KHAN, ARRESTED ON JULY 9, WAS SENTENCED ON AUGUST 8 TO 28 YEARS RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF RS. 19,000. BECAUSE OF THE CONVICTION, SHER ALI'S ASSEMBLY SEAT WAS DECLARED VACANT AND PREPARATIONS FOR A BYE-ELECTION TO BE HELD OCTOBER 5 WERE MADE. SUBSEQUENTLY, ON SEPTEMBER 23 CONVENING AUTHORITY OF SPECIAL TRIBUNAL WHICH CONVICTED SHER ALI, REDUCED HIS 28-YEAR SENTENCE TO 18 MONTHS AND THE FINE TO RS. 3,000. FOLLOWING THIS THE ELECTION COMMISSION RESTORED SHER ALI'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEAT AND CANCELLED SCHEDULED BYE-ELECTION. ON SEPTEMBER 27, THE SEAT OF ANOTHER NAP MPA, GUL KHAN NASEER, ARRESTED JUNE 10, SENTENCED SEPTEMBER 20 TO 3 YEARS SIMPLE IMPRISONMENT, WAS DECLARED VACANT. IF GUL KHAN NASEER'S SEAT IS RESTORED, AS WAS SHER ALI'S, IT WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAVE DECIDED THAT THE DEVICE OF UNSEATING OF NAP MPAS BY PURSUING CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST THEM IS TO BE ABANDONED FOR

THE TIME BEING. THERE HAVE BEEN FREQUENT PRESS REPORTS OF VARIOUS FIGURES FROM BALUCHISTAN MEETING WITH MEN-GAL, MARRI AND BIZENJO FOR THE PURPOSE OF EFFECTING A POLITICAL RAPPROACHEMENT, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH WHAT, IF ANY, CONCRETE PROPOSALS WERE CONSIDERED IN THESE MEETINGS. ANY PACKAGE WOULD REQUIRE THE RATIFICATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND IT IS NOT VERIFIABLE THAT THERE IS ANY CONCRETE PROPOSAL TO PRESENT TO HIM, EVEN THOUGH GOP MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS GHULAM MUSTAFA JATOI TRAVELED TO QUETTA SEPTEMBER 27 AND HELD MEETINGS WITH GOVERNOR BUGTI.

3. COMMENT: ATTENDANCE AT THE ASSEMBLY SESSION WILL GIVE SOME CONCRETE INDICATION OF CONTINUING NAP COHESION. SUCCESSFUL BOYCOTT WOULD ILLUSTRATE CLEARLY THAT IT IS THE NAP WITH WHOM PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO MUST DEAL, RATHER THAN IT'S PROVINCIAL OPPOSITION, IF HE WISHES TO RESOLVE IMPASSE WHICH HAS EXISTED IN PROVINCE SINCE FEBRUARY 15 DISMISSAL OF NAP/JUI MINISTRY. WHILE SOME 11TH HOUR DEVELOPMENT CANNOT BE RULED OUT, IT APPEARS MORE THAN LIKELY ASSEMBLY WILL CONVENE, ATTENDANCE WILL BE POOR, AND IMPASSE WILL CONTINUE. TIGER

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